

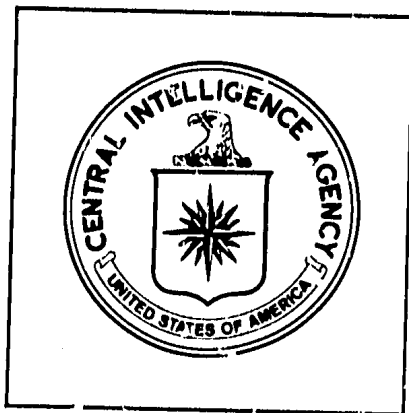
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No. 0441/75
March 7, 1975

134

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MIDDLE EAST - AFRICA - SOUTH ASIA

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the Middle East - Africa Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

CONTENTS

Sudan: Army Mutiny in the South.....	1
India: Protest March on Parliament.....	2

Mar 7, 1975

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Sudan

Army Mutiny in the South

A mutiny broke out about March 1 among three companies of former southern Sudanese guerrillas who were incorporated into the Sudanese army under the 1972 unity agreement that ended a lengthy civil war. The mutineers, who reportedly killed their commanding officer and took hostages, are stationed in a remote area of southern Sudan near the Ethiopian border.

The rebellious troops appear to have timed their move to coincide with the anniversary this week of the unity agreement and also to take advantage of a routine rotation of their battalion's only Arab-manned company. The mutineers, who are of black African ethnic stock, have never ceased being suspicious of the government in Khartoum and have opposed its efforts to integrate them fully into the northern-dominated army.

The government has taken steps to prevent the mutiny from spreading. Armored vehicles were sent to the area, and the top ranking southerner in the army, Major General Lagu, is reported to be negotiating with the mutineers. Lagu himself is a former guerrilla leader. The government has not allowed any publicity on the mutiny.

The US embassy in Khartoum sees no indications that the mutiny was instigated by foreigners, nor does it appear to be related to tensions in Ethiopia. Since the civil war ended, there have been several incidents of fighting between southern and northern Sudanese soldiers. There also has been dissatisfaction and unrest among southern civilians opposed to rule by Khartoum.
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1

Mar 7, 1975

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India

Protest March on Parliament

Public participation in reform leader J. P. Narayan's protest march on Thursday in New Delhi fell well below his target of one million, but his anti-government movement is likely to grow and cause more concern to the government of Prime Minister Gandhi.

The number of marchers, estimated by the US embassy at 100,000-200,000, reportedly was kept down by government measures that interfered with the flow of road and rail traffic into the capital. Nevertheless, the orderly behavior of the marchers--mostly students and middle class urbanites--probably enhanced the respectability of Narayan's "non-violent revolution," which is aimed at toppling the "corrupt" Congress Party government of Mrs. Gandhi.

The march was Narayan's most ambitious undertaking since he began his campaign last year. The marchers delivered to the leaders of parliament a charter of demands that Narayan and his supporters--an array of small opposition parties and student groups--assert are crucial to preserving democracy in India and to fulfilling the basic needs of the nation's predominantly illiterate, poverty-stricken, and rural population. The charter calls for electoral, economic, and educational reforms, as well as the eradication of corruption in public office and new elections in the states of Bihar and Gujarat where Narayan's protest movement was born.

In coming weeks, the ailing, 72-year old disciple of Mahatma Gandhi will concentrate on organizing a country-wide demonstration he has scheduled for April 6 to protest continuation of the "national emergency" that was declared at the time of the Indo-Pakistani war in 1971. Narayan accuses Mrs. Gandhi of using emergency security measures to perpetuate her political control and to hide corruption within her government.

(Continued)

Mar 7, 1975

2


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Mrs. Gandhi apparently does not yet consider Narayan's movement to be a serious threat to her government, which must face new elections within the next twelve months. She probably expects that co-operation among Narayan's diverse supporters will be short-lived. Previous attempts at opposition unity have failed, allowing the Congress Party to prevail continually since independence in 1947.

Mrs. Gandhi is also inhibited by her recognition that direct interference with the respected reformer would hurt her within the Congress Party, where there is considerable sympathy for Narayan, and would likely alienate large segments of the public. Her dismissal of the pro-Narayan housing minister on March 2, however, indicates she will not tolerate open criticism from her appointees of her unwillingness to work out a compromise with Narayan. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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Mar 7, 1975

3

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